

“The Kohen shall inscribe these curses on a scroll and erase it into the bitter waters.” (5:23)

Although it is forbidden to erase Hashem’s Sacred Name, and one who does so is punished with *malkos*, lashes, Hashem commanded that His Name be erased in order to engender peace and harmony between man and his wife. Domestic tranquility is the anchor of the Jewish family unit, so that one must go to all lengths to enhance the unity of the marriage bond. Throughout history, we find that this was a priority of many of our *gedolim*, Torah leaders. Most recently, an individual of the calibre of *Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, z.l.*, invested endless time and energy to assure that peace reigned among those families with whom he came into contact. He would lovingly refer to his work as “the one *mitzvah* I do wholeheartedly.” In an appreciation of his life, his son *Rav Yechiel Michel* devotes an impressive section to perspectives, insights and stories which emphasize the significance of marital bliss. I take the liberty of citing a few of these vignettes.

When *Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach, z.l.*, eulogized his wife, he made a statement that confounded everyone gathered there. In fact, it left an indelible impression on the entire observant world. He said, “It is customary for one to ask *mechilah*, forgiveness, from his deceased spouse. In my case, however, it is not necessary to do so, for I never once offended her during our life together.” It was difficult for people to grasp how two people could live together for almost sixty years and not need to ask forgiveness from one another.

Rav Stern would often remark that it was common for young men to ask their *rebbeim*, Torah mentors, for advice concerning how to talk to girls during the dating process, but rarely would ask for advice on how to speak to their wives during marriage. Now that is something to think about! A “holier than thou” attitude prevails among many after they get married. After all, they are the ones that are learning. Regrettably, they forget who is supporting them.

Horav Naftali Amsterdam, z.l., preeminent disciple of *Horav Yisrael Salanter, z.l.*, recounted that after his marriage, *Rav Yisrael* queried him whether he was fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *gemilas chasadim*, acts of loving-kindness. Assuming that he was referring to a *gemach*, free-loan fund, he responded that he did not have enough money to start such a fund. *Rav Yisrael* countered, “I did not mean that. After one is married, there are numerous opportunities for one to perform acts of kindness for his wife.” All too often, we are prepared to save the world, but we forget our responsibilities at home. This suggests a new twist to the idea that charity begins at home.